

AN
ANSWER
TO
Dr. SHERLOCK'S
PRESERVATIVE
AGAINST
POPERY.
SHEWING,

That *Protestancy* cannot be Defended; nor
Catholic Faith Opposed, but by Principles
which make void all Reason, Faith, Fa-
thers, Councils, Scripture, Moral Honesty.

[Lewis Sabran]

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A N S W E R

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Preservative against P O P E R Y.
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That *Protestantism* cannot be Defended, nor *Catholic Faith* Opposed, but by *Principles*, which make void all *Reason, Faith, Fathers, Councils, Scripture, Moral Honesty.*

TRUTH being all of a piece, hath this advantage, that it can never be opposed by *Truth* and *Reason*: whatever charge is drawn up against it, must prove either false in the Premises, or erroneous in the Consequence. The first Opposers of Catholic Truth in *England* being sensible of this, fell presently to *Forgeries*, clipping of *Texts, Fathers* and *Councils*, and by *Misrepresentations* to cast so much dirt upon the face of Truth, as disfigured so her native Beauty, that the common Herd not discovering so soon the Cheat, were frighted into the opposite Errors, glaz'd over with a false varnish. This method they still follow'd on, as long as the liberty of Press and Pulpit was deny'd to those who could easily have wip'd off that dirt, and laid open such gross Cheats. The *Advice to Roman Catholics*, tho' republished since, yet first set forth by Dr. Cumber in the time of the pretended Plot, when whatever was boldly sworn or said against *Innocence* and *Religion*, tho' false to the degree of impossibility, was greedily swallow'd, is a fair instance in this case, whence such false Citations, tho' they bore in the front of a *Preface* all assurance of Truth, can be produced by dozens. Now that Innocency and

Truth have room to gather breath, and speak for themselves, the method is somewhat alter'd; and those who write against *Catholic Verities*, tho' they cannot wholly forget the old trick of *Misrepresenting*, ever continu'd, from *Tyndal* and *Jewell* to Dr. *Twiss*, yet generally they make use of the second shift of *erroneous Consequences* and false Inferences, not so readily seen through by less cautious and preposited Readers: From particular Propositions true in themselves, they infer such general Assertions, or joyn Principles so loose, wild and erroneous to a plain Text of Scripture, that any *Errors* may shelter it self in the Cloak, tho' the meanest Logician cannot but blush at so open a Fraud. I happened to be lately present at a full mix'd Assembly in the City, where this method, well follow'd by the *Answerer unto the Address to the Ministers of the Church of England* being fairly laid open, most of the Protestants there alarm'd of it, found no better *salve* than to disown the Answerer as an ignorant Scribler who had betray'd his Cause. The Name of him that licens'd the Paper should, I conceive, have covered it from such reproaches. I know not the Answerer, and will not charge him with any other fault, than of having undertaken the defence of a bad Cause,

which may as well be the effect of Engagement and Prejudice, as of Ignorance. To justify him so far, I will give an instance taken from the *Preservative against Popery*, that the Cause bears no better defence, tho' it might otherwise have been expected from so fam'd an Author as Dr. *Sherlock*, who yet could not support it but by such Principles as make void all use of Reason, Faith, Fathers, Councils, Scripture, and moral Honesty, as I shall make appear in few lines, enlarging my self somewhat more on Reason, the Gift I perceive which he most values himself upon, especially in a Cause in which he tells us, (fol. 1.) *the honest Trades-man can now dispute against Popery with sufficient skill*, and undertakes to teach such how to baffle all the Catholics.

Principles of Dr. Sherlock which overthrow all right use of common sense.

He charges Catholics with this great Crime, (fol. 3.) That *they will not allow the reading heretical Books*, and proves his Charge because *God not only allows, but requires it*. Since one Error may infer another, that Congregation indeed which allows to each man, and even obliges him, to stand to his own Choice and Judgment, must allow that liberty; and how his Fellow-Ministers can justify themselves; who use all endeavors to hinder their Flock from hearing Catholic Sermons, and reading Catholic Books, I know not; much less how the Congregation established here lately by Law, having declared that each man was bound (as Dr. *Sherlock* often repeats it in his *Preservative*) to judge for himself; yet could force all Dissenters not to stand to that their Judgment, but to comply against it, and that by Excommunications, Sequestrations, Imprisonments, Exclusion from all the Preferments and Advantages of a free-born Subject, even by Hanging and Quartering: this, I confess, comes not within the reach of common sense & reason. But for us Catholics, who have inherited from St. *Paul* (Gal. 1. 8.) that Faith, that if an Angel from Heaven should teach us any thing in opposition to it, we ought not to mind him, or return him any other Answer than *Anathema*. How God should require from Us to read heretical Books, I confess my reason cannot teach me. He blames then this Inference, You have an Infallible Guide, therefore you are no more to seek.

Fol. 4. Ask them, *Whether they will allow you to judge for your selves in matters of Religion? If they do not, why will they trouble you with disputing? you cannot be convinc'd unless you judge so, and thereby resolve Faith into a private Spirit.*—Here let our Protestants fix his Foot, and not stir an inch till they disown Infallibility.

This is to say, 'tis impossible to convince a man that in reason he ought to submit his Judgment to that of any other, tho' infallible. Doth not this pretty Logic make void all the right use of common sense and reason, when it should lead us to submit to any just Authority? We find St. *Paul* (Act. 19.) frequently disputing in the Synagogue; he pretended to Infallibility through the Spirit of God who directed him: But Dr. *Sherlock* takes the *Jews* part against him, bids them *not stir an inch*, not hearken to him, till he disowns Infallibility. Spoken like a Christian Doctor.

Fol. 6. *What difference is there betwixt mens using their private Judgments to turn Papists or to turn Protestants?* The same, as betwixt two sick men, the One whereof chooses to put himself in an able Doctor's hands, whom he knows to have an Infallible Remedy, whil't the other chooses his own Simples, and makes his own Medicin; as between two at Law, the One whereof is guided by his reason to take Advice from a Wife Counsellor, the Other to be his own Counsel; as between two Subjects, the One whereof is guided by his reason to take up Arms for his King, the Other to judge of his King's Right and Command.

Fol. 9. Now the Doctor takes the Catholic's part, and tho' faintly, yet speaks well in so clear a Cause: *The intention of these Disputes is only to lead you to the Infallible Church, and set you upon a Rock, and then 'tis very natural to renounce your own Judgment when you have an Infallible Guide.* But now for convincing Reasons against this plain Truth. The first is,

They cannot with any sense dispute with us about the particular Articles of Faith, because the sense given of Scripture and Fathers takes its Authority from the Church understanding it so. This is false. The sense takes its Authority from God—who spoke that Word, tho' we are certain that we have the true Sense of that Word because we receive it from the Church, which is protected and guided, in delivering us both the Letter and Sense, by the Infallible Spirit of God, that is to abide with her for ever, according to Christ's promise, Jo. 14. 16. If *John* and *William* dispute which is the right way to a place, is *John* disabled from convincing *William* of his mistake by Reasons, because he hath with him a Guide who certainly knows the way, and that he would himself pass by those Reasons, if his Guide assur'd him that he apply'd them ill and wrongly to that way?

Fol. 11. *Must the belief of an Infallible Judge be resolved into every man's private judgment? Must it not be believed with a Divine Faith, and can there be a Divine Faith without an Infallible Judge? There can be no Divine Faith without a Divine Revelation, nor a Prudent One without*

without a moral Evidence in the motives of Credibility, on which may be grounded the evident Obligation to accept of it. The Judgment being posset with that moral Infallibility, rests not there, but observing that Goodness and Mercy of God, which cannot permit that Falshood should be propounded in his Name, with all the apparent Marks of his Hand and Seal, and without any like appearance on the contrary; inclin'd by a pious motion of the will, called by the famous Council of *Orange affectio creditatis*, and strengthened by that Grace of God which bestows the Gift of Faith, fastens on God's Veracity, and with a submission not capable of any doubt, embraces the revealed Truth. If the Infallibility of the Church were more than morally evident, it were impossible that any Heresie should be.

Fol. 17. *No understanding Protestant can be disputed into Popery, which owns an Infallible Church: First, because no Arguments or Disputations can give me an Infallible certainty of the Infallibility of the Church.* We saw Dr. *Sherlock* just now pleading for the Jews against St. Paul; now he reasons even against Christ our God blessed for evermore. His words prove that Christ, who own'd himself Infallible, did imprudently to Preach, or work Miracles; for since they could not give an *Infallible Certainty*, (an evident one he means by his whole Discourse) no prudent Jew or Gentile could be disputed by him into Faith. Arguments so offensive to pious ears ought to meet with no other Answer than Prayers for him who offers them.

'Tis impossible by reason to prove that men must not make use of their own Reason and Judgment in matters of Religion. That men must use Reason to come to the Knowledge, that God hath revealed what they believe, is very certain, as the Jews (*Exod. 14.*) *Crediderunt Domino, & Moysi servo ejus: did believe God, and Moyses his Servant;* all Nations, Christ and his Apostles; so each Christian now, *Christ and his Church*; the first as Author, the second as Witnesses (commissioned from God) of their Faith; by conceiving the Proofs they offered of their Commission. So far Judgment: So the Apostles believed Christ saying of himself that he was the Son of God; their Judgment being convinced that God spoke by him; which method appears most particularly in the man born blind, whom he cur'd, and who was thereby convinced, that *God was with him, Nisi Deus esset cum illo*: but after that, there is no further use of Reason, if we believe St. Paul, but in order to the bringing into Captivity all Understanding into the Obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10.

The Doctor frames a Dispute (fol. 21.) betwixt a sturdy Protestant as he calls him, and a Catholic. You may guess how well he manages

the Catholic's part. In the Conclusion he gives this topping reason for the Protestant Religion: *We have as much assurance of every Article of our Faith, as you have of the Infallibility of your Church.* This is the great point indeed, which if a Protestant loses, he loses all; for 'tis certain and evident, that the Catholic has the same assurance for each Article of his Faith proposed by the Church, which he hath of the Churches Infallibility. He proves it, first, *because we are in general assured that the Scriptures are the word of God.* Hitherto there holds some parity, tho' but lame; but suppose it were entire? The Conclusion would be this: *Catholics are as certain of the Sense of Scripture, as Protestants are that they have the Letter;* whence it follows demonstratively, that when Protestants differ in the Sense from Catholics, they have less assurance for it than Catholics, who have always as much as the Protestants have for the Letter, whereas Protestants must never be more certain of the Sense of the Letter, than of the Letter it self.

adly, *And in particular we are assured, that the Faith which we profess is agreeable to Scripture.* If he means they have the same proofs for this, which Catholics have for the Infallibility of the Church, that is, for the being of that Church which declares her self Infallible, (for a Church erring in such a point would cease to be the Church of Christ) then 'tis evidently false, since each Christian in this Age hath the same Evidence of her being the Church of Christ, and of her teaching Truth, and consequently of her Infallibility, which he hath of Christ, viz. Prophecies, Miracles, &c. which no Protestant as much as challenges for the Certainty of the particular Sense of Scripture. What other Sense this Proposition can have, I do not conceive.

Fol. 23. *If you must not use Reason and private Judgment, then you must not by any Reason be persuaded to condemn the use of Reason.* I never read so much and so little of Reason; there is such a rumbling of the word, which for eight or nine lines occurs at least once in each, and yet so little sense. All he says might be with equal weight said by a sick man, who dissuaded from choosing his own Remedies, and desir'd to send for a skilful Doctor, should answer, *'Tis impossible by reason to persuade me not to use my reason in governing my self by reason as my own reason teaches me, which would be to condemn reason, and yet be guided by your reason.* Such Discourse would prove the sick party at least somewhat light-headed; what 'tis a Symptom of in Dr. *Sherlock*, I will not be positive in.

Tol. 27. We must allow of no reason against the Authority of plain and express Scripture; we may reasonably conclude that God understands the Reason and Nature of things better than We. This is a very true and Catholic Principle, whence I may infer, That our Doctor, when he comes to apply it, will find enough be guilty of some most illogical Inference. And behold I am in the right! But, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, is such a plain and express Scripture. Well, go on, therefore without any expostion, no Reason can justify the Worship of another Being. A rare Consequence, to infer a Negative from an Affirmative Antecedent! 'Tis like this: A Subject must love his King, and owe Allegiance to him alone; therefore no reason can justify the love of a Child for his Father, or of a Wife for her Husband. St. Augustine (De 61. in Gen.) drew the contradictory Conclusion from that Text; he takes off all blame from Abraham, who is said in Genesis to have adored or worshiped the people, because 'tis observable, says the Saint, that in the said Commandment 'tis not said, thou shalt worship God alone, or 'tis said, and him alone thou shalt serve, which in Greek is λατρεύουσιν, for such a Service (of Laetia) is given to God alone.

Tol. 26. The Sense of the Law is the Law. But when the Law is not capable of a different Sense, or there is no such Reason as makes one Sense absurd and the other necessary, the Law must be expounded according to the most plain and obvious sense of the words. This Principle is sound; you may then be sure of a false Inference at the heel of it. He gives us that part of the first Commandment, which he calls the second, Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, &c. and concludes, so express a Law against Image-Worship, that no reason must be admitted for it. What if you be told that altho' the Jews had perhaps a Command of making no graven Image, &c. yet this being a positive Law, and not confirmed in the Gospel, doth not oblige us! will this reason be admitted? No. And yet you have no other motive to pass by as express a Law of sanctifying Saturday. What if it be reply'd, That only the making to themselves (by private Authority) an Idol to adore it with Divine Worship is forbidden: Can none of these Reasons be heard? No. Then relax'd by God's Command making several Likenesses of things on Earth, Solomon placing such in the Temple, sin'd against the first Commandment; so do all Painters, and Carvers, and those who employ them, and each Subject who stands bare-headed before the Chair of State. The truth is, what sense they put on any Text is the express Law against which no Reason must be

heard; so they challenge to themselves the Infallibility which they so proudly deny to the Church of God.

Yet this Topic he notably pursues for some pages against the Author of the *Reasons for asserting the Test*, and in as many more against Catholic Tenets, all and each misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, or no Articles of Catholic Faith.

I conclude his admirable Principles and Inferences with one so singular, that it deserves to be observed by all. 'Tis this, (fol. 45.) *No Argument from the necessity of a thing, must be admitted to prove it is.* He instances thus: *If there be no Infallible Judge, there can be no certainty of Faith, which is requir'd in all Christians. Tho' it be true, and you think it to be true, you must not allow this Consequence, Therefore there is one.* The reason he gives for it is admirable: *Such Arguments do not prove that there be such a Judge, but that there ought to be.* This is not only to misuse Human Reason, but to deny Wisdom and Reason in God; Alphonsus the Royal Mathematician was ever look'd on as guilty of a horrid Blasphemy, for having said he thought he could have order'd some things better than God did at the first Creation: 'Tis one of as deep a dye to think God ought to have done what we believe that he hath not done.

Principles of Dr. Sherlock which make void all Faith.

The Catholics prove that an uncertain or wavering Faith is no Divine Faith, which the Protestants can never have of any one Article of their Religion, because they never can have a certain One. 'Tis easily proved, because they cannot have an Act of Faith of any One Article, till their Rule of Faith propoſes it, i. e. till they know certainly what Scripture teaches of it, not by any one Text, but by comparing all the Texts that speak of that Subject: For the sense of a single Text (for Example, *My Father is greater than I*, cannot be had, but by expounding it by other Texts on the same Subject: Till a Protestant then hath a certain Knowledge, first, That he hath all the Books of Holy Writ; secondly, That all those he owns for such, were really written by inspir'd Pens; thirdly, and (since the Letter kills) That he understands the true Sense of each Text which relates to the Object of that Act of Faith; fourthly, That he remembers them all, so as comparing them, to see which is the clearer that must expound the obscurer, and what is the residue of them all, (for any one he understands not, or hath forgotten, may possi-

ibly be that One that must uphold the rest) he cannot have One Act of Faith. Now Catholics say this is impossible to any, or almost any man at least, therefore very few Protestants (if any at all) can in their whole life have one Act of Divine Faith concerning any one Mystery, tho' their Rule of Faith be never so good. Now what says Dr. Sherlock to give Protestants any Certainty?

Fol. 78. Suppose the Protestant Faith uncertain, how is the Cause of the Church of Rome the better?—Is Thomas an honest Man, because John is a Knave? If Thomas and John be accused severally of a Theft, and the stolen Goods be found with John, I conceive tho' this prove not Thomas to assuredly an honest man, yet an honest Jury would I conceive bring him in Not Guilty. That there is a true Faith, and consequently a certain Rule of Faith, all Christians acknowledge: Protestants on one side choose one Rule, (how differently ever they apply it) Catholics another. I conceive then that if the Protestant Rule be proved uncertain, 'tis plain the Catholics Rule must be the certain One.

Fol. 80. This may signify two things, first, That the Objects of our Faith are uncertain, and cannot be prov'd by certain Reasons; secondly, That our Persuasion is wavering. One of the three modi sciendi, or ways to come to the Knowledge of any thing, known to every Logician, is *Division*. But our Doctor it seems is not so far advanced; for besides the Two mentioned, it signifies a Third thing also; to wit, That whatever reasons there may be for a thing, he who believes it, hath for the motive of his Belief those certain Reasons. There are, for Example, certain Reasons whereon to ground a Faith in Jesus Christ; yet he that believes in Christ because his Mother hath taught him so, hath a very uncertain, and no Divine Faith.

We believe the Apostles Creed, and whatever it contained in the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. This is all we believe, and I hope they will not say these things are uncertain. They are in themselves very certain, but not to any Protestants, whose Rule of Faith cannot make him certain of any one Article. But the pleasant Answer: which justifies Turk, Jew, and Gentile. For this is the Rule of Faith, according to Dr. Sherlock, most sufficient: *We believe all that God hath revealed, and nothing else: Is not all that He hath revealed certain?* Here lies the Doctor's gross mistake, that no one is an Heretic for not believing what God has revealed to be true; 'tis impossible to come to so mad an Heresie: But They are so for not believing him to have revealed what in effect he hath, and hath given sufficient methods to come to the knowledge of, if they would but use them.

Fol. 81. If these things be not built upon certain reasons, their Infallible Church can have no certainty of the Christian Faith. Even this is most notoriously false; since she is not infallible by any Light of her own, but by the Guidance of the Spirit of Truth. Were not the Apostles certain of what Christ told them, when they had acknowledg'd him the Son of God, before he gave them certain reason for it? 'Tis a blind Impiety even to think so.

Fol. 82. 'Tis their common Argument, That there is a great variety amongst Protestants, and that they condemn one another with equal confidence and assurance. 'Tis one of your usual Artifices to leave out always the pressing part of our Arguments. You should have added, *tho' they use the same Rule of Faith, and apply it by the same means.* Thus propos'd, 'tis an unsufferable Argument against your Rule of Faith, and evidently proves it uncertain.

Fol. 83. Were all Protestants of a mind, would their consent and agreement prove the certainty of the Protestant Faith? Not at all. Yet 'tis a most ridiculous Inference of yours (Fol. 84.) This is the same Rule, and their disagreement proves not their uncertainty. All Union is no Argument of the Spirit of God, for people may combine to do ill; yet St. Paul assures us, *Disunion and Disfension is a certain Mark of the absence of the Spirit of God.*

Dr. Sherlock's Position which makes void all Scripture-proof.

'Tis this, (Fol. 72.) *If a Mystery appear against sense and reason, we must have a Scripture-proof as cannot possibly signify anything else, or else it will not answer that Evidence which we have against it: A Sense and Reason proving it naturally impossible.* A Text which cannot possibly have another sense, doth not leave it in any ones liberty, who owns Scripture, to be an Heretic; therefore the Church produced no such Text against the *Arians* or *Nestorians*, whence it evidently follows, That according to Dr. Sherlock the *Arians* and *Nestorians* were bound not to believe the Trinity, and the Incarnation of Christ. A happy Ministerial Guide: and well led those who follow such!

Dr. Sherlock's Position making void all use of Holy Fathers and General Councils.

'Tis this: After he hath most respectfully told us, (Fol. 73.) That Learned men may squabble about them, he gives these Rules, without which they

they be of no use. We must know, first, That the Father is really Author of the Book, (or the Council of such a Decree;) secondly, That he was not corrupted by the Ignorance or Knavery of the Monks, (and to make this impossible, he alter'd their very Habit and Dress, to fit them to the modes of the Times;) thirdly, That the Father here he says; fourthly, That he did not alter his Opinion after. That's to say, some of these requisites not being possibly to be known, no use is to be made of any.

asks of the Virgin only to pray for us to Christ, which is all the Power we give her. His other instances have more of Malice yet, and less of Truth.

To conclude, in the very Chapter where he would excuse Misrepresentation, he proves the continual Practice of his Party for it so to the full, that to be thorough-Sherlock, and thorough-Protestant-Minister, he concludes with the most dissingenuous Misrepresentation and the most false Calumny imaginable, as a supposed and owned Truth; to wit, That Catholics worship the visible Species in the Eucharist. A most impudent Slander! no Catholic being guilty of it, adoring the Cloaths of Christ, when they ador'd him upon Earth.

Dr. Sherlock's Principle making void all use of Civil Charity and Moral Justice to our Neighbor.

It lies in his last Chapter, in which he attempts in vain to colour the Misrepresentations his Party hath ever been guilty of.

It is, when a man's exterior Actions are naturally capable of a good and pious meaning, and he ever and clearly declares that it is his, yet to fasten upon him another opposite design and meaning, taken from his Opposers contrary Principles; than which there cannot be a greater, or more unjust dissingenuity. This he calls to join Protestant Principles with Popish Practices. Then he gives several instances that he is as good at the Practice as at the Theory of this his Maxim. For Example;

To insinuate (fol. 89.) that a Catholic thinks the Blessed Virgin more powerful in Heaven than Christ, he tells you that he says ten Ave Maria's for one Pater Noster; tho' he knows that half the Ave Mary is in Memory of, and Thanksgiving for the Incarnation of Christ; the other

An Advice to Protestants,

In Dr. Sherlock's words, only putting the word Scripture in lieu of Fathers.

Fol. 76. Amongst-Christians there is none in a hundred thousand who understand all Scripture, and it is morally impossible they should, and therefore certainly there must be an easier and shorter way to understand Christian Religion than this, or else the generality of Mankind, even of protest Christians, are out of possibility of Salvation. Think well on it, as you will answer at God's Tribunal for the care you took of the One only Necessary, the saving of your Souls: Seek out that easier and shorter way, and walk faithfully in it.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

F I N I S.

